New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report

SAU 50
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Final Report May 30, 2000

Visit Conducted on:

March 13-14, 2000

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<u>Note</u>: It should be noted that suggestions are not considered corrective actions and therefore are given as technical assistance. The district is not mandated to implement them.

Introduction

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New Hampshire Special Education Program Approval Report

SAU 50

I. INTRODUCTION:

A New Hampshire Department of Education Special Education Program Approval visit was conducted at SAU 50 comprised of the following schools: Rye Elementary School and Preschool Program, Greenland Central School and Preschool Program, Maude Trefethen School, Newington Public School, Rye Junior High School, Portsmouth Middle School, and Portsmouth High School. The visiting team met on March 13-14, 2000 in order to review the status of special education services being provided to eligible students.

Activities related to this evaluation included the close review of all the teaching certifications of special education staff, analysis of SPEDIS data and random inspection of student records. Interviews were held with the Special Education Director, building principals, regular and special education teachers, related service personnel and administrators as time and availability permitted. In addition, the team conducted parent interviews via telephone. Throughout the visit, the team had full cooperation from the school personnel and this helpfulness was greatly appreciated.

The report that you are about to read represents the consensus of all the members of the visiting team. Please keep in mind that this is a "report for exception", meaning that only exceptions to the NH State Standards have been addressed. If a component is not mentioned, that does not mean that the team did not review it; it just means that there were no citations of noncompliance to the Standards found in that particular area.

II. STATUS OF PREVIOUS PROGRAM APPROVAL: Conducted on March 5-6,1992

There were no SAU-wide citations or issues of significance noted in the previous program approval report. After reviewing the 1992 visit report, materials submitted for the 1999-2000 review, as well as visits to each of the schools, this program approval review team again found no SAU-wide citations. Overall, SAU 50 is commended for its efforts and diligence in providing services for special education students in an inclusive setting. The program approval team was impressed with the general and special education staff's high degree of professionalism and teamwork which was evident throughout the SAU. In addition, it is clear that throughout SAU 50 the educational needs of special education students are supported by both general and special education teachers, administration, and the School Board.

III. ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE:

Throughout SAU 50 there is a strong commitment toward providing all students with the educational supports that they need. After visiting each of the schools in the SAU, the consensus of the program approval team was that there were no major issues of significance. However, the program approval team recommends that the SAU continue to maintain strong communication with Portsmouth Middle and High Schools, and that these two schools remain actively involved in the transition process from SAU 50 to their schools. In addition, the team recommends that SAU 50 continue to be sure that all required and updated paperwork are maintained in SAU 50 students' files at Portsmouth Middle and High Schools, and for those students who are in out-of-district placements.

The program approval team visited the new preschool program at Greenland Central School and was impressed with the amount of materials and equipment available, the welcoming environment, and the skills and teamwork of the staff.

It was evident to the program approval team that the special and general education staff in SAU 50 display excellent collaboration skills and a joint responsibility for the education of all students with special needs. The staff in the SAU are always interested in receiving professional development in the areas of special education and learning styles. In all of the schools, there is an atmosphere of respect between teachers and students. The program approval team would like to commend SAU 50 on its high level of professionalism, dedication, commitment to providing all special education students with quality programming and educational supports.

IV. COMMENDATIONS, CITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS: SAU-WIDE

Name of Program(s) Visited: All

COMMENDATIONS:

- The SAU is dedicated to providing all special education students with an inclusive educational setting.
- Parents are happy with special education services overall, with the dedication of all staff to their children, and with the strong communication that teachers maintain with them.
- The general and special education staff in the SAU work well together as a team, maintain a high degree of professionalism, and are dedicated to the education of all students.

CITATIONS: None

- Ensure that all staff indicate their role on team meeting signature pages.
- Consider presenting parents of preschoolers with all of their options for preschool placements (i.e., within the community) so that they may make an informed decision.
- Consider adding lines to special education paperwork indicating that parents have received copies of required items.
- Include evidence in student files that parents received copies of IEP progress reports (ex. copies of a cover letter sent home with the progress reports).
- The parents of students at the junior high level who were interviewed are concerned about the transition to Portsmouth High School. Continue to facilitate smooth transitions by having the High School staff become more involved in SAU 50's 8th grade IEP or end-of-year meetings.
- The paraprofessionals in the SAU would benefit from more opportunities for training.
- The general classroom teachers in the SAU would benefit from more training on understanding the needs of students with disabilities in the classroom, and on modifications.
- Consider using SAU 50 special education paperwork for students at Portsmouth Middle and High Schools.
- Continue to pursue educational programs and services throughout the SAU for EH students.

Preschool Program at Rye Elementary School

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Preschool Program

COMMENDATIONS:

- The preschool offers a strong program for all children.
- The staff development workshops on learning styles and lesson plans is beneficial to preschool staff.
- The preschool program is committed to maintaining 50% of its enrollment for typically developing children.
- The space allocated for the preschool program is attractive with adequate materials.
- The preschool staff is dedicated to meeting students' needs.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

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parents.

Ed.1107.02(d) 1 file: There was no evidence that parents were given written notice within 15 days of

the initial referral.

Ed.1109.04(a) 1 file: There was no evidence that parents were given 10 day notice of the IEP meeting.

<u>Ed.1119.07(c)(3)</u> Paraprofessionals should not be assuming the responsibilities of a teacher or substitute.

CFR#300.346 (a)(l)(i) 1 file: There was no evidence that the most recent evaluation results were considered in

the IEP development.

- Ensure that staff indicate their roles on the team meeting signature page.
- Ensure that a team member signature page is always part of the IEP paperwork in the student's file.
- It was not clear whether or not other options outside of this preschool program (such as community-based preschools) are explained to parents before students enter preschool. There are currently no preschoolers in community-based programs.
- Consider ways to provide the preschool staff, OT and SLP with joint planning time.
- Ensure that the preschool is included in the elementary school-wide programs when appropriate.

Preschool Program at Greenland Central School

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Preschool Program

COMMENDATIONS:

- This new preschool program is well equipped with plentiful materials and equipment, and a cheery and welcoming atmosphere.
- There are many parent volunteers working in the program.
- The files were well-organized and contained all necessary components.
- The staff are a very competent and skilled and work well together.
- The community is invested in an inclusive environment where typically developing children and students with disabilities attend the preschool program.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed.1119.07(c)(3) Paraprofessionals should not be assuming the responsibilities of a teacher or substitute.

- Ensure that staff signify their role on the team meeting signature page.
- Consider ways to create a common meeting time for teachers, therapists and aides.
- It was not clear whether or not other options outside of this preschool program (such as community-based preschools) are explained to parents before students enter preschool. There are currently no preschoolers in community-based programs.

Maude H. Trefethen School

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Resource Room 2) Modified Regular

COMMENDATIONS:

- The staff at the Trefethen School are committed to inclusion.
- The teachers work well together as a team and are dedicated to student needs.
- Related services are provided in the classroom at least 50% of the time.
- There is a strong sense of community in the Trefethen School.
- The school's environment is one of mutual respect between students and teachers.

<u>CITATIONS</u>: (in numerical order)

Ed.1109.01(a) 1 file: The present levels of performance in the IEP did not indicate how the disability

affects involvement and progress in the general curriculum.

CFR#300.347(a)(5)(i) 1 file: There was no evidence of what modifications, if any, would be needed for state

or district-wide assessments.

<u>CFR#300.347(a)(5)(ii)A</u> 1 file: There was no statement indicating that the child would not participate in state

or district-wide assessments, and why the test is not appropriate.

CFR#300.347(a)(5)(ii)B 1 file: There was no statement of how the child would be assessed.

- Consider organizing the paperwork in students' files in chronological order for easier access to information.
- Add a line or page to meeting paperwork where it can be indicated whether or not parents have received their notification of rights.

Newington Public School

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Resource Room 2) Modified Regular

COMMENDATIONS:

- Classroom teachers have a good understanding of the special education process and are dedicated to student needs.
- Class sizes are small and provide for a very supportive environment.
- There is a welcoming atmosphere evident in the school
- The teachers work hard to determine the needs and services in complicated cases, such as students with significant disabilities.
- The special education student files were well-organized.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed.1107.03(a)	1 file: Lacked evidence that at least one certified teacher in the area of the suspected disability
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was on the evaluation team.

Ed.1107.07(c)(1) 1 file: Lacked evidence that at least one certified teacher in the area of suspected disability

was a member of the determination of eligibility team.

Ed.1109.04(a) 1 file: Lacked evidence that parents were given procedural safeguards at each notice of an

IEP meeting.

Ed.1111.01 1 file: There was no evidence that the Extended School Year process was completed by 4/30

or 60 days before starting.

Ed.1115.06 1 file: Lacked evidence that LRE was determined annually and meets the criteria.

- Encourage special education staff to pursue LD certification, or consider pursuing the hiring of additional staff with LD certification.
- Consider increasing the amount of computer software available for instruction.
- Increase the amount of staff development available for paraprofessionals.

Greenland Central School

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Modified Regular 2) Resource Room

COMMENDATIONS:

- The staff at the Greenland Central School are dedicated to the students' needs.
- The special and general education staff maintain strong communication with each other, and spend a significant amount of time on collaboration.
- The staff works hard to maintain the philosopy of inclusion at this school.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed.1107.02(b) 1 file: Lacked evidence that parents were given written notice immediately upon referral

Ed.1107.08(d)(4 & 7) 1 file: The LD evaluation report was missing the following information: the relationship

of the student's behavior, during observation, to their academic functioning; and the determination of the team concerning the effects of environmental, cultural or economic

disadvantage.

Ed.1109.01(a) 1 file: There was no explanation in the IEP of how the disability affects involvement and

progress in the general curriculum.

Ed.1109.11 2 files: There was no evidence on the IEP progress reports of how the progress shows the

extent to which it is sufficient to achieve the goals by the end of the year.

Ed.1119.06(b) The resource room is not of sufficient size or space to implement students' IEPs.

Ed.1125.03 2 files: The written prior notice did not contain all the required content.

<u>CFR#300.346(a)(l)(iii)</u> 1 file: There was no evidence that state or district-wide testing results were considered in

the IEP development.

- All staff should be sure to indicate their roles on team meeting signature pages.
- Consider including in students' files some written record that parents were sent home the IEP progress report (ex.: copies of cover letters sent home with the progress reports).
- Provide more professional development opportunities to classroom teachers in the areas of understanding the types of disabilities and in modifications.

Rye Elementary School

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Modified Regular 2) Resource Room

COMMENDATIONS:

- The special education teachers are provided with adequate time for planning.
- The general and special education teachers work well together and teachers are invested in the educational needs of all students.
- The school's administration and the School Board are dedicated to providing the services needed for special education students.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed.1107.02(b)	1 file: Lacked evidence that parents were given written notice of the referral immediately.
Ed.1107.02(d)	2 files: Lacked evidence that parents were given written notice of the disposition of the referral within 15 days of the initial referral.
Ed.1107.07 (3)	1 file: Lacked evidence that an LEA representative was at the determination of eligibility meeting.
Ed.1109.01(a)	1 file: The IEP did not state how the disability affects involvement and progress in the general curriculum.
Ed.1109.01(c)	1 file: The IEP did not indicate the extent to which the child would participate in the regular classroom.
Ed.1109.01(n)	1 file: There was no parent signature on the IEP.
Ed.1109.03	2 files: Lacked evidence of an LEA representative in attendance at the evaluation, determination, IEP or placement meetings.
Ed.1109.11	1 file: Lacked evidence on the IEP progress report of whether the progress showed the extent to which it is sufficient to achieve the goals by the end of the year.
Ed.1115.06	2 files: There was no evidence that LRE was determined annually.
Ed.1125.03	1 file: The written prior notice did not contain all the required content.
Ed.1125.04(3-4)	2 files: There was no evidence of a written consent for placement.
CFR.300.346(a)(l)	(iii) 1 file: Lacked evidence that state or district-wide testing results were considered in

SUGGESTIONS:

• Ensure that staff indicate their roles on team meeting signature pages.

the IEP development.

- Consider adding written evidence on special education paperwork that parents have received copies of evaluations, evaluation reports, team meeting minutes and IEP progress reports.
- Be sure to note on IEPs when alternative grading procedures are being implemented in a student's program.
- Increase the amount of training available for paraprofessionals.
- Increase the amount of updated computer equipment in the school.

Rye Junior High School

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Modified Regular 2) Resource Room

COMMENDATIONS:

- The general classroom teachers feel as if they are a part of the special education team, and are supported in the classroom by special education staff.
- There is a warm and welcoming atmosphere evident throughout the school.
- Both special and general education teachers feel that they have a joint responsibility for the education of all students.
- The special and general education teachers collaborate and co-teach.
- The special education staff is committed to keeping parents informed and included as part of the special education process.
- There are numerous courses offered which incorporate hands-on activities such as industrial arts/technology education, home economics, music, science labs and once a week enrichment activities. There are also ample extracurricular opportunities in sports and other after-school activity programs.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed.1107.03(a)	1 file: The evaluation team did not include at least one certified teacher of suspected disability.

Ed.1107.05(k)	1 file: The initial evaluation was not conducted within 45 days and there was no signed
	extension of testing in the file.

Ed.1107.07 (c) 1 file: Lacked evidence that a teacher certified in the area of suspected disability was at the determination of eligibility meeting.

Ed.1109.04(a) 1 file: There was no evidence that parents were given a 10 day written notice of the IEP meeting which contained all the required content.

- Clarify whether or not a student is receiving individual or consult counseling services on the IEP.
- Consider designating an LEA representative for the district to provide continuity.
- Consider adding lines to special education paperwork which indicate whether or not parents have received copies of required documents.
- Ensure that all evaluators sign their evaluation reports.
- It is difficult for the school to get substitutes for paraprofessionals as the pay rate is lower than it is for teacher substitutes. Consider options to alleviate this difficulty.
- The Junior High School needs to address programming options for its growing EH population.
- Increase staff development opportunities for both general and special education teachers in the areas of EH and other disabilities.

Portsmouth Middle School (SAU 50 students)

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Modified Regular 2) Resource Room

COMMENDATIONS:

- The general and special education teachers welcome all SAU 50 students to the Middle School, regardless of
- The teachers are dedicated to and caring toward students.
- All special education students are fully integrated into the general classroom.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed.1107.03(a)	1 file: The three-year reevaluation team did not have at least one certified teacher of suspected disability.
Ed.1109.01(a)	1 file: The IEP did not show evidence of having present levels of performance.
	1 file: The IEP did not show evidence of how the disability affects involvement and progress in the general curriculum.
Ed.1109.01 (c)	1 file: The IEP did not indicate the extent to which the child will participate in the regular classroom.
Ed.1109.01(d)	1 file: The IEP did not indicate the expectation of regular classroom participation.
Ed.1109.01(g)	1 file: The IEP did not indicate the frequency and location of the services and modifications.
Ed.1109.01(i)	1 file: There was no evidence of objective criteria and evaluation procedures and schedules on at least an annual basis.
Ed.1109.01(j)	1 file: The IEP did not indicate the individuals or providers responsible for implementing the IEP goals and modifications.
Ed.1109.01(l)	1 file: The IEP did not include a statement of transition service needs focusing on the student's course of study.
Ed.1109.01(m)	1 file: The IEP did not include a statement that transition services were not needed and the basis on which this was determined.
Ed.1109.03(2)	1 file: A regular education teacher was not present at the reevaluation meeting.
Ed.1109.04(a)	1 file: Lacked evidence that parents were given a 10 day notice of the IEP meeting with all the required content.
Ed.1109.11	1 file: Lacked evidence of regular and systematic monitoring of the IEP goals.
Ed.1115.06	1 file: Lacked evidence that LRE is determined annually and meets the criteria.
Ed.1125.04(a)	1 file: Lacked evidence of a written consent to evaluate for the most recent evaluation.
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- Consider case-managing the SAU 50 students at Portsmouth Middle School as you would out-of-district students, using your own paperwork, LEA and policies and procedures.
- SAU 50 should work closely with the Portsmouth Middle School to be sure that their students' special education files contain all the necessary updated paperwork, and that these files are well organized so that forms can be retrieved easily.
- Ensure that team members indicate their roles on team meeting signature pages.

• SAU 50 should consider working with Portsmouth Middle School to design programs and services for their students who may enter the school with an EH special education code.

Portsmouth High School (SAU 50 students)

PROGRAM(S) VISITED: 1) Modified Regular 2) Resource Room

COMMENDATIONS:

- The general and special education teachers are dedicated educators who visibly enjoy working with students.
- The special and general education teachers work well together as a team, maintaining good communication with each other.
- The High School is dedicated to accommodating students' needs.
- There is strong communication between SAU 50 and the High School's administration and teaching staff.
- The special education staff does not single out special education students, but provides classroom support to all students.
- The High School provides adequate time to special and regular education teachers for planning and case management.

CITATIONS: (in numerical order)

Ed 1107 02(b)	1 file: Lacked evidence that	parante wara givan	written notice of	the referral immediately
Eu.1107.02(0)	i ille. Lacked evidence mat	parents were given	WITHEII HOUGE OF	the referral minieuratery.

Ed.1107.08(c) 1 file: There was no LD observation in the file.

<u>Ed.1109.01(b)</u> 1 file: The IEP did not have measurable annual goals with benchmarks or objectives that enable the child's involvement in the general curriculum.

Ed.1109.01(d) 1 file: The IEP did not indicate the expectation of regular classroom participation.

<u>Ed.1109.01(g)</u> 1 file: The IEP did not indicate the frequency and location of the services and modifications.

Ed.1109.01 (k) 3 files: The IEP did not indicate the statement of parties assuming financial responsibility.

<u>Ed.1109.03(2)</u> 1 file: There was no evidence that a regular education teacher of the child attended the IEP or placement meetings.

Ed.1109.04(a) 1 file: There was no evidence that parents were given a 10 day notice of the IEP meeting.

<u>Ed.1109.11</u> 1 file: There was no evidence that parents are informed of IEP goal progress at least as often as they are informed of their non-disabled children's progress.

1 file: The IEP goal progress did not show the extent to which it is sufficient to achieve the goals by the end of the year.

Ed.1119.07(b) Paraprofessionals should not be assuming the responsibilities of a teacher or substitute.

<u>Ed.1123.04(a)(7)</u> There was no public listing of the names and positions of those employees who have access to personally identifiable information.

Ed.1123.04(a)(10) 1 file: There was no record of disclosure in the file.

Ed.1125.04(a) 2 files: There was no evidence of a written consent to evaluate.

Portsmouth High School (SAU 50 students), Continued		
<u>CFR#300.346(a)(l)(iii)</u>	1 file: There was no evidence that the most recent evaluation results were considered in the IEP development.	
CFR#300.347(a)(4)	1 file: There was no explanation of the extent to which the child will not participate with non-disabled children in the regular classroom.	
CFR#300.347(a)(5)(i)	1 file: There was no statement of needed modifications in the administration of state or district-wide assessments of student achievement.	
<u>CFR#300.347(a)(7)(i)</u>	3 files: There was no statement how IEP progress will be measured.	
CFR#300.347(a)(7)(ii)	3 files: There was no statement of how parents will be informed of their child's progress toward the annual goals.	
CFR#300.347(c) and 300.	2 files: The IEP did not have a transfer of rights statement that the child has been informed of his/her rights, 1 year before age 18.	

- Ensure that copies of IEP progress reports are put in students' files each quarter.
- The Portsmouth High School staff should be more involved in the IEP/transition meetings of 8th graders from SAU 50 who will be entering the high school the following fall.
- Consider some alternatives to classroom projects, such as community/service learning projects for students who would benefit from this (ex. EH students).
- The special education files were not well organized and more attention could be put into developing a system of organization for these records.
- Parental involvement in special education appears to diminish as SAU 50 students transition to the high School. Continue to pursue active parent involvement in students' programs.
- All students would benefit from more opportunities for hands-on projects in the classrooms.
- The general education teachers would benefit from more training on special education issues.
- The paraprofessionals would benefit from increased training opportunities.
- The high school should continue to pursue the hiring of more paraprofessionals.

Out-of-District Files

COMMENDATIONS:

- The SAU maintains strong communication with private school placements.
- The SAU is dedicated to the educational needs of students in out-of-district placements.

<u>CITATIONS</u>: (in numerical order)

Ed.1107.03(a)	1 file: The evaluation team did not meet the multidisciplinary criteria - the qualified examiner
	was not in attendance.

Ed.1107.06 1 file: There was no current evaluation summary report in the file.

Ed.1109.01(j) 1 file: The IEP did not indicate the individuals or providers responsible for implementing IEP

goals and modifications.

Ed.1109.01(1) 2 files: There was no statement of transition service needs for 14 and 15 year olds focusing on

the student's course of study.

Ed.1109.01(m) 2 files: There was no statement that transition services were not needed and a basis of how

the determination was made.

Ed.1109.01 (n) 1 file: There was no LEA representative signature on the IEP.

Ed.1109.03 1 file: Lacked evidence that a regular education teacher of the child attended the placement

meeting.

1 file: Lacked evidence that a team member who can interpret evaluation results was present

at the evaluation, determination, IEP or placement meetings.

Ed.1109.04(a) 2 files: Lacked evidence that parents were given their procedural safeguards at each notice of

an IEP meeting.

2 files: The IEP meeting notice did not indicate whether or not transition services would be

discussed for 14 and 15 year olds.

Ed.1109.11 1 file: There was no evidence of regular and systematic monitoring of the IEP goals.

1 file: There was no evidence of whether parents are informed of IEP progress on annual

goals at least as often as they are informed of their non-disabled children's progress.

1 file: The IEP goal progress did not show the extent to which it is sufficient to achieve the

goals by the end of the year.

Ed.1123.04(a)(7) There was no public listing of the names and positions of those employees who have access to

personally identifiable information.

Ed.1123.04(a)(10) 2 files: There was no record of disclosure in the files.

Ed.1123.05 1 file: There was no evidence that parents were given their annual rights at the initial referral

for evaluation or at each reevaluation of the child.

2 files: There was no evidence that parents were given their annual rights at each notification of an IEP meeting.

Ed.1125.04 1 file: There was no written consent to evaluate in the file.

CFR#300.346(a)(l)(iii) 2 files: There was no evidence that state or district wide testing results were

considered in the IEP development.

CFR#300.347(a)(5)(i) 1 file: There was no statement of needed modifications in the administration of state

or district-wide assessments of student achievement.

CFR#300.347(a)(5)(ii)(A) 1 file: There was no statement of whether or not the child would participate in all or

part of state or district wide assessments and why the test is not appropriate.

CFR#300.347(a)(5)(ii)(B) 1 file: There was no statement of how the child would be assessed if state or district

wide testing would not be used.

CFR#300.347(a)(7)(i) 1 file: There was no statement of how IEP progress would be measured.

CFR#300.347(a)(7)(ii) 1 file: There was no statement of how parents will be informed of their child's

progress toward the annual IEP goals.

- Continue developing a system of organization for out-of-district files.
- Continue to be sure that SAU 50 students in out-of-district placements have the required, updated paperwork in their files.
- Keep copies of IEP progress reports in out-of-district files.

ADDENDUM

JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM

SAU 50

Student File Review

Case Study Document

Reimbursement Claim Form

Case Study Addendum Form

ADDENDUM JAMES O. MONITORING PROGRAM

SAU 50

NUMBER OF FILES REVIEWED:

At the time of this compliance visit, there were no students who qualified under the James O. consent decree.

COMMENDATIONS:

NONE

<u>CITATIONS</u>: (in numerical order)

NONE

SUGGESTIONS:

NONE